Geographic Information System Initiative

Department of Education

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Nova Scotia public school students will soon have access to a full database of geographic information - as well as the software to use it - to learn about their province this year.

Through a unique collaboration between the departments of Education and Housing and Municipal Affairs, junior and senior high schools will be on the cutting edge of the field of geomatics, which is the science and technology of gathering, analysing, interpreting, distributing and using geographic information.

"We're providing tools and data that are relevant to students at all levels and in several subjects," said Education Minister Jane Purves. "It's also an opportunity for students to develop skills in an industry where Nova Scotia is considered world-class."

Schools across the province received ArcView Geographic Information System software with new computers supplied through the Information Economy Initiative, a program to provide computers, software, and technical support to all of Nova Scotia's junior and senior high schools.

The Department of Housing and Municipal Affairs has arranged for students to have access to extensive sets of world data, as well as Nova Scotia data supplied by Nova Scotia Geomatics Centre and prepared for school use by the Centre of Geographic Science, or COGS.

"I'm very pleased to support this initiative by making my Department's geomatics data available to Nova Scotia's schools," said Municipal Affairs Minister Angus MacIsaac. "The increased awareness of geomatics is good for the industry and will open the door to rewarding careers for many young people."

The geomatics data collections can be applied to a variety of subjects. For example, topics such as watersheds can be used for science and geography research, and aerial photographs are of interest to history and social studies students.

"We know that students learn best when they can apply lessons learned locally," said Ms. Purves. "We expect to see many long-term benefits for students and teachers."

Ms. Purves announced the initiative today at the opening of the Geomatics Atlantic 2000 conference in Halifax.

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